

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 SP-02 PM-03 L-01
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6985
INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT AU PRINCE 4547

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, PDIP, HA, US
SUBJECT: CALL ON FOREIGN SECRETARY RE NEREE AFFAIR

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 4532

1. FOLLOWING UP MY PRELIMINARY CONVERSATION OF LAST NIGHT
(DEC 14) CONCERNING THE LUC NEREE AFFAIR, DCM AND I CALLED
PERSONALLY ON FOREIGN SECRETARY BRUTUS TODAY TO UNDERLINE THE
GRAVITY WITH WHICH THIS EVENT MIGHT BE VIEWED IN WASHINGTON.
I TOLD HIM THE EVENT COULD PUT IN DOUBT THE ENTIRE GOH POLICY
OF LIBERALIZATION AND IMPAIR OUR RELATIONS RIGHT ACROSS THE
BOARD, UNLESS A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION WERE HELD, THE PERPE-
TRATORS BROUGHT TO TRIAL AND ALL THREATS TO PUBLICATION OF
JEUNE PRESSE ENDED.

2. BRUTUS, NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, SAID WASHINGTON WAS ALWAYS
INCLINED TO SET A DIFFERENT AND HIGHER STANDARD FOR HAITI THAN
FOR THE REST OF SOUTH AMERICA. IN FACT THE HAITIAN
GOVERNMENT AND HAITIAN PEOPLE HAD SET IN MOTION THE
LIBERALIZATION POLICY BECAUSE THEY WANTED IT, AND WERE
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DETERMINED TO SEE IT SUCCEED STEP BY STEP. IF THE GOH
HAD WANTED TO CLOSE LUC NEREE'S PAPER, JEUNE PRESSE, IT
COULD HAVE DONE SO EASILY AND DIRECTLY. IT WOULD NOT CHOOSE
A METHOD SO CLUMSY AND SO LIKELY TO BRING DOWN CRITICISM
UPON THE GOVERNMENT. WE HAITIANS ARE, HE SAID, THE FIRST
TO REGRET THE INCIDENT BUT IT WAS NOT OUR DOING. WHILE IT
IS TRUE THE GOH WARNED LUC NEREE AGAINST DRIVING A WEDGE

BETWEEN THE ARMY AND THE VSN, THE GOH HAD HAD NO INTENTION OF TAKING ANY FURTHER STEP AGAINST JEUNE PRESSE.

3. BRUTUS CONFIRMED THAT TWO VSN HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN THE INCIDENT, AND SAID HIS INFORMATION WAS THAT THE VSN HAD ACCUSED LUC NEREE OF ALLEGED BAD DRIVING, AND HAD SUBSEQUENTLY PULLED HIM OUT OF THE CAR AND BEATEN HIM. THE VSN WERE NOW LOCKED UP IN CASERNES DESSALINES PRISON AND BRUTUS SAID THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR WILL HOLD AN INQUIRY. BRUTUS PROMISED TO KEEP ME INFORMED. I REINTERATED THE IMPORTANCE OF MY BEING ABLE TO REPORT FULLY WHAT STEPS THE GOH WAS TAKING TO INVESTIGATE AND BRING ACTION AGAINST THE MALDOERS. I STRESSED OUR CONTINUING CONCERN FOR RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN THE INSTANCE, PRESS FREEDOM.

4. DURING MY CALL, THE PRESIDENT TELEPHONED BRUTUS CONCERNING THE AFFAIR. BRUTUS REITERATED WHAT HE HAD JUST TOLD ME AND TOLD ME THE PRESIDENT WOULD SEE ME AT 10:00 A.M. TUESDAY TO DISCUSS THE AFFAIR. THIS WILL GIVE ME AN OPPORTUNITY FURTHER TO UNDERSCORE OUR CONCERNS.

5. PRIOR TO THE BRUTUS MEETING I MET THIS MORNING WITH HENRI BAYARD, JR., DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN AIRLINES IN HAITI, SON OF MINISTER BAYARD AND ONE OF THE CLOSEST PERSONAL FRIENDS OF THE PRESIDENT. ALTHOUGH THE MEETING HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED AS PART OF MY PROGRAM

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TO MEET HEADS OF AMERICAN BUSINESSES IN HAITI, THE CONVERSATION QUICKLY TURNED TO THE EVENTS OF LAST NIGHT. YOUNG BAYARD, WHO HAD LIVED FOR EIGHT YEARS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

, WAS OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED. HE IS A LIBERAL AND WANTS HAITI TO MOVE TOWARD GREATER FREEDOM AND CLOSER TIES WITH THE U.S. I FRANKLY TOLD HIM THE PRESIDENT WAS NOT BEING KEPT INFORMED OF EVENTS AND THAT THIS WAS PROOF. WHILE I REALIZED THE PRESSURES FROM ALL SIDES THAT THE PRESIDENT IS UNDER, I STRESSED TO BAYARD THAT THE MOMENTUM TOWARD LIBERAL DEMOCRACY MUST CONTINUE. IN THE CASE AT HAND, I TOLD BAYARD THE PRESIDENT MUST TAKE A FIRM STAND IN FAVOR OF PRESS FREEDOM AND THAT THE ASSAILANTS MUST BE BROUGHT TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE. I LET BAYARD KNOW THAT U.S. PROGRAMS IN HAITI WERE CERTAINLY IN JEOPARDY AND THE PRESIDENT SHOULD UNDERSTAND THIS AND THAT I DID NOT THINK THE PRESIDENT ALWAYS RECEIVED FULL REPORTS FROM HIS OWN PEOPLE. BAYARD RESPONDED THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD LIKE TO DEVELOP A CLOSER PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ME. I SAID THAT WAS FINE, BUT I EXPECTED HIM TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE SINCE I WOULD LIMIT MY CALLS TO OFFICIAL BUSINESS. I CHIDED BAYARD ABOUT THE REFUSAL OF THE PRESIDENT TO MEET WITH GOVERNOR GILLIGAN AND ME BECAUSE IT WAS "TOO EARLY

IN THE MORNING." BAYARD SAID THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT BEEN KEPT INFORMED, IS ISOLATED AND TIMID. I FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT WHEN I DO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT HE SPEAK IN A LOUDER VOICE SO THAT I CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND HIS FRENCH (THE PRESIDENT LIKES TO SPEAK IN A WHISPER). THE MEETING ENDED WITH BAYARD PROMISING TO REACH THE PRESIDENT WITH AN ACCOUNT OF OUR CONVERSATION. I BELIEVE THAT IT WAS THE RESULT OF THIS MEETING THAT THE PRESIDENT CALLED BRUTUS AND THAT HE HAS ASKED THAT I MEET WITH HIM NEXT WEEK. I INTEND TO BE CANDID WITH HIM.

6. COMMENT: I THINK WE SHOULD LET THINGS STEW FOR THE PRESENT. ENOUGH HAS HAPPENED TO CLEARLY UPSET THE GOH AND PROBABLY HAS STOPPED ANY FURTHER ACTION AGAINST JEUNE PRESSE.
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THERE MAY EVEN BE TRIAL AND PUNISHMENT OF THE PERPETRATORS AND THIS MIGHT DETER FURTHER SUCH ACTS. I THINK WE CAN NOW DENY THE ARMS REQUEST AND I WOULD LIKE TO DO THIS NOW, EITHER WHEN I MEET THE PRESIDENT OR IN ANOTHER MEETING WITH BRUTUS. BEYOND THAT, I THINK WE SHOULD WAIT AND GIVE THE LIBERAL ELEMENTS A CHANCE TO REACT. THERE IS DEFINITELY A POWER STRUGGLE GOING ON AND WE SHOULD TRY TO CREATE CONDITIONS SO THAT THE LIBERALS IN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT EMERGE ON TOP. I THINK THE PRESIDENT WANTS TO BE IN THIS CAMP, BUT HE IS, AS BAYARD SAID, AFRAID, TIMID, VERY INSECURE AND NOT ABOUT TO MAKE ANY BOLD MOVES ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.
JONES

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